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select a channel that depends on a time period. That appears to be true, but it is not what is claimed. In other words, Wasilewski fails to teach that the selection is in response to a desired time period of communication by the requestor. Wasilewski teaches how to provide a television channel, e.g., "Cowboy Channel" (Col. 7, line 44), by supplying different feeds at different times. In the example discussed in Wasilewski, the Cowboy Channel includes a first feed of basic service 1 during time period until 7:00 pm and a second feed of basic service 30 during a time period between 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm. (Col. 7, lines 40-68) The selection of the time periods and feeds is presumably a programming decision which is not related to any desired time period of viewing from the subscriber. Indeed, Wasilewski specifically states that the switchover between basic services (feeds) is unknown to the subscriber. (Col. 7, lines 54-55). The presently claimed invention is not switching feeds to provide a television channel made up of various different feeds. As discussed in the Background of this application, it is rekeying caused by membership changes that is the problem to be solved. Hence, members are grouped according to their membership duration so that shorter-term members do not cause all longer-term members to be rekeyed. Expressed in the context of the Wasilewski Cowboy Channel, this might be implemented by providing the Cowboy Channel on multiple virtual channels (regardless of the feed), and assigning a subscriber to one of those virtual channels based on how long the subscriber will view the Cowboy Channel without changing channels. Without limiting the scope of the claims in any way, it is worthy of note that obtaining a duration of membership forecast might be impractical in the context of television service (Wasilewski), but practical in the context of multiconferencing as described in this application. For the reasons stated above, claim 1 distinguishes the cited combination and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Dependent claims 2-16 which are associated with claim 1 further distinguish the invention and

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are allowable for the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 2-16 is therefore also requested.

Independent claims 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 distinguish the combination of Caronni and Wasilewski in a manner similar to that stated above. For example, claim 17 distinguishes the combination by reciting **“a receiver for receiving a request from a requestor to join the multicast session for a time period; an assignment module for selecting a virtual channel from a plurality of virtual channels for communications by the requestor in response to a desired time period of communication by the requestor.”** (emphasis added) Claim 32 distinguishes the combination by reciting **“receiving a request from a requestor to join the multicast session for a time period; computer code for selecting a virtual channel from a plurality of virtual channels for communications by the requestor in response to a desired time period of communication by the requestor.”** (emphasis added) Claim 47 distinguishes the combination by reciting **“associating each member with one of the plurality of multicast virtual channels based on a desired communication time of the each member.”** (emphasis added) Claim 63 distinguishes the cited combination by reciting **“an associator module for associating each member with one of the plurality of multicast virtual channels based on a desired communication time period of the each member.”** (emphasis added) Claim 78 distinguishes the combination by reciting **“computer code for associating each member with one of the plurality of multicast virtual channels based on a desired communication time period for the each member.”** (emphasis added) For the reasons stated above, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 is requested. Dependent claims 2-16, 18-31, 33-46, 48-62, 64-77, and 79-92 further distinguish the independent claims with which they are associated and are also allowable over the combinations of Caronni in view of Wasilewski, Caronni in view of Wasilewski further in view

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of Foladare, and Caronni in view of Wasilewski further in view of Kadansky for the same reasons stated above. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 2-16, 18-31, 33-46, 48-62, 64-77, and 79-92 is therefore also requested.

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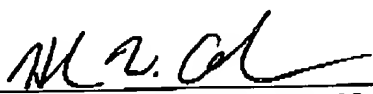
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Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned, Applicants' Attorney at 978-264-6664 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date .


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